

## **7420 – Automated Attendant Systems - Best Practice Recommendations:**

- Equipment currently in place can continue to be used and maintained. When it has reached its useful life and the cost of repair or upgrade exceeds its value, replacement should be considered.
- Long agency names are to be avoided. Greetings and options should be short and to the point. All greetings must be businesslike. Avoid attempts at humor and seasonal greetings that some individuals might find offensive.
- When an Auto Attendant is used, callers should be informed early in the message (within 15 seconds) on the procedures (Press Zero) to reach an operator or attendant. An attendant should always be available to respond to these calls. For example; "Hello you have reached the Cabinet of XYZ, if at any time you wish to speak to an attendant, please press Zero. To reach Department ABC press (1), to reach Department DEF press (2)..."
- When these systems are used, the calling pattern of incoming calls must be mapped and analyzed to determine the most frequent call reasons. In setting up the automated responses the most frequent call reasons should be given call option one. For example, if the most frequent call reason is requesting hours of operation, then choice one should be for hours of operation. This will resolve the majority of calls with the first option and not require the caller to hang on listening to several other choices.
- The Auto Attendant will present a number of options which need to be selected, which in turn can take you to additional levels of options. These are called Calling Trees. In general use, this practice should be limited to the combined calling tree of all options being not more than 4 questions wide by three levels deep, maximum. The shorter the number of selection choices the better. Too many options may result in individuals becoming frustrated and abandoning the call.
- When software options allow, any statement requiring a positive confirmation should be entered by using the '#' key. (e.g. "You may enter an extension number now, or you may access the directory by pressing the # key."